



Etruscan Civilization

A Cultural History

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0 100 miles
0 150 kilometers



Fig. 1 View of Volterra.

Vulci, Luni sul Mignone, Sorgenti della Nova) have signs of occupation as early as the Late Bronze Age, a period also known as Protovillanovan.

The Iron Age

The Early Iron Age civilization of the villages from which the later Etruscan communities developed in an unbroken sequence is known as the Villanovan, a name derived from that of a site east of Bologna, Villanova di Castenaso, where this civilization was first identified through excavations in 1853. We can thus say that the Etruscans flourished at least from the tenth century onward and that—as is the case with most other nations—a great number of different ethnic, cultural, geographic, political, and linguistic factors contributed to the formation of their culture. The long and complex historical process of genesis may have begun as early as the Late Bronze Age, during the second millennium. In the absence of written sources from this early period, archaeology alone provides us with information on how the inhabitants of the Early Iron Age villages lived.

VILLANOVAN SETTLEMENTS AND BUILDINGS

Traces of huts of the ninth and eighth centuries have been excavated, but so far only in a few sites. Among the best-explored remains are those of some twenty-five dwellings at Tarquinia in the Calvario area of the future necropolis of Monterozzi. Others have been identified at Veii, at Gran Carro on the shore of Lake Bolsena, at San Giovenale, Sorgenti della Nova, Acquarossa, and Campassini near Monteriggioni as well as at sites of the Latial culture: Satricum and on the Palatine in Rome. These huts, of circular, oval, or rectangular plan, are haphazardly arranged and loosely spaced out (FIG. 2). Rectangular or square huts may represent a slightly more recent stage. In most cases all that is preserved are shallow foundation trenches, cut into the soil or rock to receive wattle-and-daub walls and postholes for wooden uprights that supported a thatched roof with projecting eaves.

A small porch, again identifiable by postholes, sometimes protected the entrance, which was normally placed at one of the short sides of the hut and marked by a threshold. The large oval huts occasionally had a secondary door in one of the long sides and probably a window on the opposite side, and most huts would have had a centrally placed hearth. The rear part of the hut could form a separate room, divided off by a partition wall at the level of the last post supporting the roof. None of the structural parts of these huts have survived. In rare cases the perimeter of the hut is still outlined by low dry-stone walls that served to prop up the wooden posts of the wattle-and-daub elevation and by fragments of the covering layer of clay with impressions of the reeds and branches from which the walls were woven. Drainage channels to conduct rainwater from the steeply thatched roofs away from the hut and into pits or jars survive in some cases in the rocky ground.

Large storage jars for foodstuffs were sometimes sunk into the floor of a hut or immediately outside. Crevices in the rock, exhausted clay pits, and specially made holes in the soil served as refuse dumps.



Fig. 2 Model of an Iron Age hut under construction. Based on Hut A on the Germalus Hill in Rome. Eighth century B.C. Rome, Museo Palatino 425531. Model by A. Davico.

Among the most adventurous Greek sailors of the Iron Age were the inhabitants of the island of Euboea off the east coast of Attica and Boeotia (MAP pp. 48–49). Excavations at Lefkandi on the island's west coast and elsewhere have produced evidence that Euboean ships must have traveled the Aegean, from the Chalkidike in the north to Cyprus and the Levant in the south.

Sherds of Euboean pottery decorated with concentric circles and dated to the late tenth century have been excavated at Tyre, while the ninth- and eighth-century aristocratic tombs at Lefkandi abound in imported exotic grave goods, such as egyptianizing faience beads, seals, and bowls; Egyptian bronze vessels; North Syrian bronze bowls; an amphora of Cypriote manufacture; and Syrian gold jewelry. It is still a matter of some debate who the carriers of these luxury goods were. The Phoenicians were certainly involved in this maritime trade, and by the late ninth century the influence of Oriental jewelers and craftsmen is seen on Euboea, at Athens, on Crete, and in the Dodecanese. The Cypriote port of Kition was settled by Phoenicians in the middle of the ninth century, giving them access to the rich copper mines of Tamassos. A characteristic type of Euboean drinking cup, the skyphos, decorated with a geometric design of hanging semicircles, has turned up at Amathous on Cyprus. In the later part of the ninth century Euboean trading contacts had been established at various points in the Levant, the most important one at Al Mina on the mouth of the Orontes, where Euboeans exchanged goods. During the second quarter of the eighth century the Greek imports at Al Mina seem to have increased notably, as the quantity of Euboean pottery found there and in the hinterland suggests. Thus stimulated by direct as well as indirect contact with the Levant, Greece began to absorb a whole new world of Oriental imagery and techniques.

Euboean Settlements in the Gulf of Naples

Euboean Greeks settled on Ischia (Gr. Pithekoussai) in the middle of the eighth century. Intensive excavation of the site and its cemeteries has demonstrated that they engaged in trade, metalworking, and pottery production; they also farmed and practiced viticulture. The discovery of a piece of iron ore (hematite) from Elba in a dump on the acropolis of Pithekoussai implies that the island was involved in metal trade with Etruria.

TRADE CONNECTIONS BETWEEN THE EASTERN AND WESTERN MEDITERRANEAN

PREVIOUS PAGES

Greek and Phoenician expansion in the Mediterranean, eighth to fifth century B.C.

Both Greeks and Phoenicians were attracted to the Tyrrhenian coast by abundant deposits of metal ores, especially copper and iron, in Etruria and on Elba and Sardinia. Sporadic finds of imported Euboean and Phoenician pottery show foreign

contact at the end of the ninth and the early eighth centuries on Sardinia (in the nuraghic village of Sant'Imbenia near Alghero), on Sicily at Villasmundo, and in Italy at Pontecagnano and Veii.

Besides the Greeks, Levantine merchants and craftsmen whose residence and burial on Ischia are attested by inscriptions on pottery and numerous scarab-shaped sealstones ("Lyre Player" type) played their part in these exchanges. Included in this trading circuit was Sardinia, which had profited from close contacts with Cyprus during the Late Bronze Age. Occasional Near Eastern visits to the island had taken place from the late fourteenth century onward, but direct imports and exchanges were interrupted by the general upheaval that affected the eastern Mediterranean around 1200 B.C. The search for new sources of metal, particularly tin, which is essential for the manufacture of bronze, had brought the ancient prospectors to the west, where they must have obtained knowledge of tin mines in Cornwall. Silver was another metal in demand; rich deposits were found in the lower Guadalquivir region of Spain, in Sardinia, and, to a lesser extent, in Northern Etruria, in the mountainous area between the rivers Ombrone and Cecina.

By the second quarter of the eighth century there is evidence of a Phoenician presence at Cadiz; as of the end of the eighth century the earlier transitory commercial contacts with the West were replaced by real Phoenician colonization there from the cities of the Lebanese coast and Cyprus. A contributing reason for this movement was the westward pressure on that area by the Assyrians under the kings Tiglathpileser III (745–727) and Sargon II (722–705). Tyre founded the city of Carthage; other settlements established on the North African coast were Utica and Lixus. In Spain, Almuñecar (ancient Sexi), Toscanos, and Malaga were founded after Cadiz. On the west and north coasts of Sicily, the Phoenicians founded Motya, Palermo, and Solunto, while on Sardinia the colonies of Nora, Bitia, Sulcis, and Tharros on the south and west coasts of the island were among the earliest. Nora has yielded an inscribed stela, dated by most scholars to the eighth century. In the Phoenician tophet of Sulcis on a small island off the Sardinian coast a child was buried in a Greek pot manufactured at Pithekoussai at the end of the eighth century. Recently, Phoenician sherds of the early eighth century have even been discovered in Portugal at Lisbon and at Santarém, 50 km up the river Tagus.

Early Conflicts at Sea

It is likely that the far-flung, seaborne enterprises of foreign prospectors, merchants, and settlers did not always have a peaceful character. It is highly significant that neither the Greeks nor the Phoenicians were able to found colonies on Italian soil north of the Bay of Naples, and it suggests that this region must have been jealously guarded by its inhabitants. We know that the Etruscans themselves had long been engaged in maritime traffic, particularly with Sardinia, and we may

assume that hostile encounters between their ships and those of the newcomers occurred frequently.

The seas flanking the area of Italy settled by Etruscans received Etruscan names: the Tyrrhenian Sea to the west (the Greek name for the Etruscans was *Tyrrhenoi* or *Tyrsenoi*) and the Adriatic to the east (after the town of Adria, which ancient writers held to be Etruscan). According to Dionysios of Halikarnassos (*Rom. Arch.* 1.30.3–4), the Etruscans called themselves *Rasenna* “after one of their leaders.” The Romans called them *Etrusci* or *Tusci*.

The emergence of what was to be known as a thalassocracy, that is, a maritime supremacy of Etruscan ships (Dion. Hal. 1.11; Diod. Sic. 5.40), is recognizable during the seventh century, a period when Etruscan pottery turned up in Sicily, and ships and battles at sea were first represented on Etruscan vases and on Greek vases made in Etruria. But the fourth-century Greek historian Ephoros (in Strabo 6.2.2) relates in connection with the foundation date of the city of Naxos (734), the oldest Greek colony in Sicily, that previously the Greeks had avoided these waters for fear of meeting with Tyrrhenian pirates. This comparatively late source thus suggests that Etruscan ships sailed in the region of the Straits of Messina as early as the eighth century, and the finds of Italic fibulae of late eighth-century date in eastern Sicily seem to confirm such early contacts.

well before 600, when Marseilles (Gr. Massalia), the first Greek colony in the area, was founded. It has been surmised that, in exchange for cargoes of wine, bronze vessels, and pottery brought to Gaul, the Etruscan merchant-sailors carried back, besides slaves and hides, metals not found in Italy but abundant in France, including gold and tin, some of the latter probably shipped from Cornish mines.

The trade routes between the Mediterranean and the Atlantic in Gaul largely followed the rivers Rhone, Soane, and Loire, with an important nodal point in the region of Bourges. Long-distance exchanges must always have been indirect, that is, goods were passed on in stages, carried by many different persons.

Celtic imitations in gray pottery of Etruscan bucchero jugs seem to have been produced in southern France during the second half of the sixth century, while Etruscan bronze vessels for banqueting have turned up in aristocratic tombs and residences in Gaul and in the Rhine and Danube regions, where they inspired local bronzeworkers. Exotic luxury vessels had become status symbols for the Celtic princes, who appreciated wine in addition to native mead and beer.

TRADE BY SEA

Some of the shipwrecks that have been excavated by underwater archaeologists carried mixed cargoes, suggesting that these boats operated over long distances, loading and unloading a variety of goods in many harbors along the way. Such must have been the case with a ship that sank near the island of Giglio, off the coast of Tuscany, early in the sixth century. The vessel must have started out from Phokaia on the west coast of Asia Minor or from the island of Samos, loaded with East Greek oil and wine amphorae and Ionian cups. Subsequently it took on Corinthian and Laconian unguent bottles, bars of iron and lead, and round copper ingots marked with Greek letters. Before putting in at Giglio, the ship had probably sailed via Corinth and through the Straits of Messina to Southern Etruria, taking on a cargo of Etruscan bucchero vessels and about 130 transport amphorae filled with the remains of resin, pine kernels, and preserved olives. A finely engraved Corinthian bronze helmet and arrowheads, wood and ivory pipes, a wooden diptych and stylus, a wooden bedstead with inlaid decoration, a small wooden box with a lid carved with a floral ornament, as well as East Greek lamps and fishing utensils were presumably the property of the ship's wealthy, literate, and musical owner. She went down, perhaps struck by a storm, while leaving the island, where anchor stocks made from local stone had been taken on board. Divers have raised part of the keel and hull of the ship; it had a sewn construction, that is, its planks had been lashed together with cords.

Other shipwrecks, notably some found off the south coast of France, contained more homogenous cargoes of wine amphorae, bucchero cups, etc. Such



ships will have served in the traffic between Etruscan merchants and native settlements there. We cannot be certain of the nationality of the owners and crews, but it is reasonable to assume that both Greeks and Etruscans carried on profitable seaborne trade (as well as piracy) in Tyrrhenian waters.

The increasing number of finds in the coastal regions of Pisa, the Versilia (north of Pisa), and Liguria show that in the sixth century there must have been a number of small Etruscan landfalls or ports on that coast, where traders had points of support and discharged part of their goods.

REPRESENTATION OF A SEA BATTLE An encounter between a heavy merchantman with a high defensive prow and a slim, oared warship with a sharp waterline spur for ramming, both with fully armed warriors on deck, is represented on one side of a krater discovered at Cerveteri (FIG. 44). The scene may be one the painter, a Greek immigrant called Aristonothos, had seen with his own eyes. On the other side is a mythical encounter between hostile opponents: the blinding of Polyphemos by Odysseus and his companions.

Fig. 44 Krater signed by the Greek Aristonothos. Side A. A sea battle. From Cerveteri. Mid-seventh century B.C. Painted pottery. H. 36.3 cm. Rome, Musei Capitolini 172.

This krater is an instructive example of the manifold cultural influences that flowed together in the Southern Etruscan coastal cities in the vital stages of their formation. We have already mentioned the introduction of new techniques and styles in the potting and painting of vases. The subjects represented on the krater reflect both actual economic-political conditions and the growing familiarity of Etruria with Greek myth and poetry. The sea battle depicts naval and commercial rivalry between individual Greek and Etruscan ships and the gradual adoption of hoplite tactics (files of warriors, identically armed with round shields, spears, and helmets, who occupy the decks of both ships). We cannot tell who are Greek and who are Etruscan. Both ships are fitted with a ram spur, obviously to deal with piratical attacks. (According to Plin. *NH* 7.56.209, the ram spur was invented by an Etruscan named Pisaio = from Pisa.)

The artist's signature on the krater stands for the art of writing, acquired by the Etruscan aristocracy from the Campanian Greeks for social prestige as well as for practical and perhaps religious purposes. Lastly, the krater embodies the new way of life adopted by the ruling class, an important part of which is the use of fine painted pots for wine during banquets.



III

The Archaic Period

about 575–480 B.C.

THE FLOWERING OF THE ETRUSCAN CITIES

The principal Etruscan cities were autonomous and only loosely linked in a (religious) association. Separately they had developed their cultural identity and their political and economic institutions and spheres. We have seen how this diversity is reflected in the artistic individuality and varying funerary customs of the different cities. The most important and famous were, from south to north, Cerveteri (Etr. *Caisra*, *Cisra*; Lat. *Caere*; Gr. *Agylla*), Tarquinia (Etr. *Tarch[u]na*; Lat. *Tarquini*), Vulci (Etr. *Velch-*, *Velc[a]*; Lat. *Vulci*), Roselle (Lat. *Rusellae*), Vetulonia (Etr. *Vetluna*, *Vatluna*), and Populonia (Etr. *Fufluna*, *Pupluna*); and, in the interior of Etruria, Veii (Etr. *Vei-*), Volsinii (Etr. *Velsena*, *Velzna*), Chiusi (Etr. *Clevsin-*; Umb. *Camars*; Lat. *Clusium*), Perugia (Etr. *Per[u]sna*; Lat. *Perusia*), Cortona (Etr. *Curtun-*), Arezzo (Lat. *Arretium*), Fiesole (Etr. *Vipsul*; Lat. *Faesulae*), Volterra (Etr. *Velathri*; Lat. *Volaterrae*), and Pisa (Lat. *Pisae*).

Ancient authors mention the association of Etruscan cities as the twelve or fifteen peoples of Etruria (*duodecim* or *quindecim populi Etruriae*), or simply as *Etruria* or all of Etruria (*omnis Etruria*). The number twelve for the cities of Etruria proper (which was perhaps mirrored in those of the “colonial” areas of the Po valley and Campania) was probably of ritual nature. It is found also in western Asia Minor, where the Greek cities, with which Etruria was in close cultural contact, were organized into the twelve members of the Ionian League.

We know very little about the nature of the Etruscan “League.” Livy mentions that the Etruscan cities under their leaders (Lat. *principes*) assembled annually for consultation at the Fanum Voltumnae, the federal sanctuary near Orvieto that is



as yet undiscovered (Livy 4.23, 5.1, 10.16). Religious celebrations and games recalling the pan-Greek festivals held at Olympia took place at this sanctuary. A passage in Servius indicates that there were twelve Etruscan kings (Lat. *lucumones*), one of whom presided over these assemblies (*Aen.* 8.475). Livy refers to the election of a king by the twelve *populi*, each of whom contributed a lictor (1.8, 5.1). He also mentions the election of a priest by the periodic assembly. The description of this elected head of the Etruscan cities (at the end of the fifth century, when the conflict between Rome and Veii had started) as *sacerdos* points to his having extraordinary religious and temporal powers. It is likely that during the Archaic period the functions of king and priest were closely allied.

Fig. 116 Rock-cut road
with wheel ruts in Etruria.



During the Archaic period, the production of *bucchero pesante*, much of it destined for tombs, was an important industry in Chiusi, whence it was widely distributed elsewhere in Etruria. The fine, thin-walled *bucchero sottile*, originally made in Southern Etruria during the seventh century, was gradually replaced by thicker wares decorated with impressed friezes made with a cylindrical carved roller or with a rich relief decoration of female heads and added figures modeled in the round (FIG. 151). This type of bucchero was also manufactured in great quantities at Vulci, Tarquinia, and Orvieto and, in local variations, in Etruscan Campania. The production declined during the fifth century and was eventually replaced by other types of pottery, such as black-glazed wares.

Fig. 151 Miniature funerary tray (lt. *focolare*). Probably from Chiusi. About 550–500 B.C. Bucchero. L. of tray 41.7 cm. Florence, Museo Archeologico 3122–31.

THE EMPORIA

The gradual erosion of the power of the landowning aristocratic chiefs, in whose hands the production and distribution of goods had formerly been concentrated, coincided with the rise of a new form of commerce. Whereas foreigners, under the protection of local rulers, had been integrated into Etruscan society during the seventh century, in the course of the sixth and fifth centuries, they seem to have been excluded from the cities proper but allowed to frequent or to settle in emporia—trading enclaves—situated at the margins of the urban territory, usually where Etruscan port facilities already existed. Here the foreign craftsmen and merchants were protected by their own divinities in newly founded sanctuaries that guaranteed the conditions of their life and trade and gave asylum to fugitives and slaves.

We have mentioned emporia founded earlier by Phoenicians and Euboeans as well as by other Greeks. The most famous of the more recently established emporia was Naukratis, settled by Aiginetans and Ionians in the Nile Delta during the reign of the pharaoh Amasis (579–526 B.C.). Similar Greek trading posts grew up on the Tyrrhenian coast of Etruria during the early sixth century: Pyrgi, depend-

ing on Cerveteri; Regae on Vulci; and Gravisca on Tarquinia. A little later Adria and Spina were founded in the Po Delta on the Adriatic.

Gravisca

Excavations at Gravisca (near Porto Clementino), the harbor of Tarquinia, have provided much information on what nationalities visited this emporium and what divinities they worshiped. Excavations have revealed the remains of a number of Greek sanctuaries, of which the earliest, dating from the beginning of the sixth century, was dedicated to Aphrodite (Etr. *Turan*). The name of this goddess, *mi turuns*, incised on the lip of a Laconian krater tells us that both Greek and Etruscan mercantile families frequented the spot.

From the middle of the sixth century onward, the votive offerings at Gravisca became numerous, consisting, beside fine imported pottery, of amphorae, lamps, bronze and ivory statuettes, Oriental luxury goods and their imitations made at Naukratis, agricultural implements of iron, and pieces of stone anchors. Many of the gifts were inscribed by their dedicants, the majority in Ionian Greek dialect, indicating that they came mainly from Samos, Miletos, and Ephesos. A large influx of Laconian pottery occurred during the second and third quarters of the sixth century, and there are also many fragments of Corinthian wares. In the second half of the sixth century Attic vases came to the fore, at first black-figured and later on and in lesser quantity, red-figured ware.

One significant votive gift was a collection of pigments used for painting, tangible proof that East Greek wall-painters, as well as vase-painters, were active in Etruria. Their influence is clearly recognizable in several of the tomb-paintings at Tarquinia and in painted terra-cotta panels from the walls of houses and tombs at Cerveteri.

Some of the names inscribed on objects dedicated in the sanctuary of Gravisca are found also at Naukratis, which shows that the emporia on the Tyrrhenian coast formed part of an extensive commercial network that involved some Lydians, but mainly Greeks from Asia Minor, the Dodecanese, Egypt, Corinth, and Aigina. The unusual name of one Pactyes recalls that of the Lydian appointed by the Persian king Cyrus to look after the treasure of the defeated king Kroisos at Sardis (Hdt. 1.153). The Persian conquest of Ionia and subsequently of Egypt closed the emporium of Naukratis in the Nile Delta and brought many foreign traders and craftsmen to the west.

Among the most striking votive objects discovered at Gravisca is part of a marble anchor bearing a dedicatory inscription to Aiginetan Apollo by one Sostratos. Perhaps he is the same Sostratos, son of Laodamas of Aigina, who is mentioned by Herodotos (4.152) as a merchant so rich that none could rival him, an active trader during the last quarter of the sixth century. The incised or painted Greek letters *SO* found on the underside of over a hundred Attic vases imported into Etruria are thought by some to be his monogram. Many of these vases were

produced in the Athenian workshop of Nikosthenes, which catered particularly to the Etruscan market by adopting original Etruscan (*bucchero*) shapes.

Aiginetans were also responsible for the opening up of the Adriatic emporia already mentioned, which, in the following century, with Attic participation, flourished on trade with the Northern Etruscan regions of the Po valley, with Venetic peoples, and eventually with immigrant Celtic tribes, who had begun to cross the Alps, probably as early as the sixth century (Livy 5.33.4).

Returning to the emporium of Gravisca, we find that the divinities under whose protection the foreign merchants and craftsmen operated were predominantly great goddesses. We have already mentioned Aphrodite, protectress of navigation and safe landing; the goddess here seems to have been connected with the Laconian armed Aphrodite and with certain aspects of the Phoenician armed Astarte. A pair of Greek bronze votive statuettes of a helmeted and armed female divinity of the second quarter of the sixth century was discovered in the sanctuary of Aphrodite (inv. 72/10674 and 75/18896).

The other Greek goddesses venerated at Gravisca were Hera and Demeter. The first presided over marriage and the sexual life of women, the second, together with her daughter Kore, was the provider of corn and agricultural wealth. Under the name of Vei, Demeter was worshiped by the Etruscans. A minor male divinity was Adonis, the Oriental youth and lover of Aphrodite. His cult and ritual burial were practiced in a special garden enclosure adjoining the temple of Aphrodite. A single dedication mentions the goddess Aretume/Artemis.

Gravisca illustrates how closely interwoven the Archaic culture of the coastal cities of Southern Etruria had become with that of their Greek and other foreign trading partners. Etruscans, for their part, could dedicate objects in Greek sanctuaries in Greece, as shown by a fragmentary owner's inscription in Etruscan (*mi pl[. . . c . . .] minur*) under the base of a stemless Laconian cup fragment in Munich (inv. vk 86) that was excavated at the Temple of Aphaia on the island of Aigina.

The Greek frequentation of the port of Gravisca ceased about the time of the battle off Cumae in 474, but the harbor continued to serve the city of Tarquinia, and the sanctuaries of Gravisca were restructured and enlarged. Henceforth dedications were made purely in Etruscan to the goddesses Turan, Vei, and Uni, the Etruscan equivalents of Greek Aphrodite, Demeter, and Hera. At the beginning of the third century, the cults were abandoned, probably as a result of the Roman conquest.

Etruscan industrial production, in particular bronze and iron utensils and pottery, was distributed, besides by maritime trade, via interior land- and river routes to the Italic peoples of the peninsula. Warlike pastoral-agricultural nations inhabiting the Apennines and Abruzzi lived at a less advanced level than the urbanized Etruscans, for whom they provided a source of manpower for manual work and warfare. Their aristocrats accumulated Etruscan luxury goods in their

own tombs, as shown by finds from Fabriano and Pitino di San Severino in the Marche, as well as from Castrano, Alfedena, and Campovalano in the Abruzzi.

Pyrgi

Of the harbors of Cerveteri the one nearest the city was Alsium (It. Palo Laziale), another was Punicum (a name hinting at Punic frequentation), but the most important was to the north at Pyrgi (It. Santa Severa, at km 52 of the Via Aurelia). On the site of a Bronze Age village, this coastal settlement was founded at the end of the eighth century, urbanized about 600 B.C., and probably eventually became the base of the navy of Cerveteri. Its Greek name, *Pyrgoi* = the Towers, implies that the settlement was fortified. Servius (*Aen.* 10.184), the fourth-century-A.D. commentator on Vergil, calls it a fortified settlement (Lat. *castellum*) and the “metropolis” of the Etruscans. This reflects an ancient story, according to which the Etruscan nation was of Lydian origin. The Lydians, so Herodotos tells us (1.94), left their country because of famine and sailed from Asia Minor under Tyrrhenos, son of their king, Atys. Disembarking and settling in Italy, they henceforth called themselves Tyrrhenians after their leader. Having become Etruscans, they occupied the Pelasgian city of Agylla and changed her name to Caere (It. Cerveteri; Strabo 5.220).

The sanctuary of Pyrgi, which comprised several temples, lay directly south of the port and consisted of two different nuclei, all facing the sea. According to ancient Greek writers, the sanctuary was dedicated to the goddess Eileithyia, a helper in childbirth, and to Leukothea, a sea goddess; Apollo is also mentioned.

Excavations at Pyrgi, carried out since 1957, have led to spectacular discoveries that shed fresh light on the political and social conditions prevailing at Cerveteri at the end of the sixth century, as well as on historical and linguistic aspects.

THE SANCTUARY OF EILEITHYIA Oriented to the southwest, like the preexisting harbor settlement, the northern part of the sanctuary was erected on a large artificial platform surrounded by a rectangular enclosure, accessible through a main gate in its east wall. Here ended the 10-m-wide carriage road built in the first half of the sixth century that connected the town of Cerveteri with its main port. The seaward side of the enclosure wall (and presumably the altars that must have stood in front of the temples) has been eroded by the receding shoreline, while of the temples only the foundations have survived dismantling and subsequent ploughing.

TEMPLE B Some smaller, older shrines (fragments of their terra-cotta decoration of ca. 530–510 have been identified) lay somewhere in this area, but, about 510 an ambitious new building program replaced them with one of the largest known sanctuaries in Etruria (FIGS. 152a, b). The first structure erected was Temple B, dedicated to Uni/Astarte, with a sacred Area c to the left of its facade; the south-

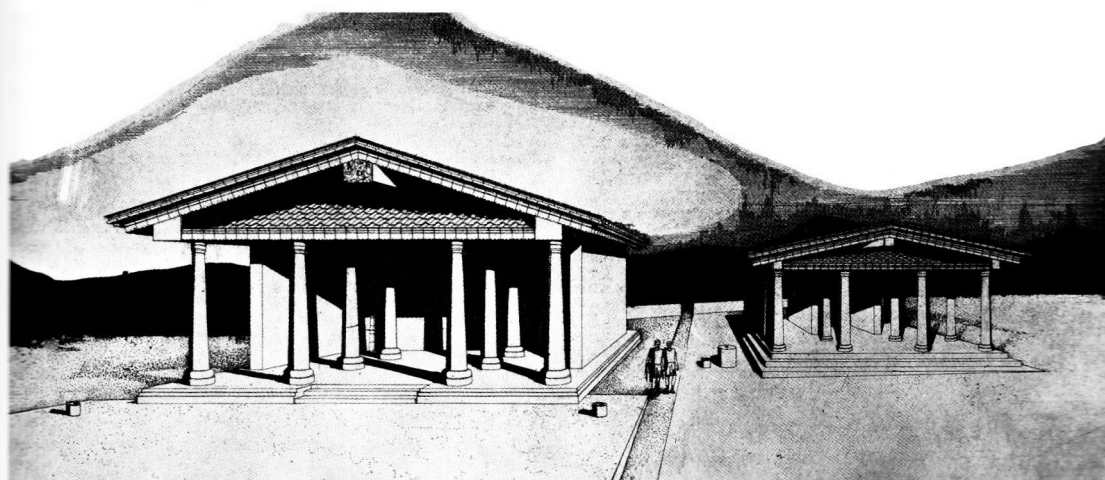
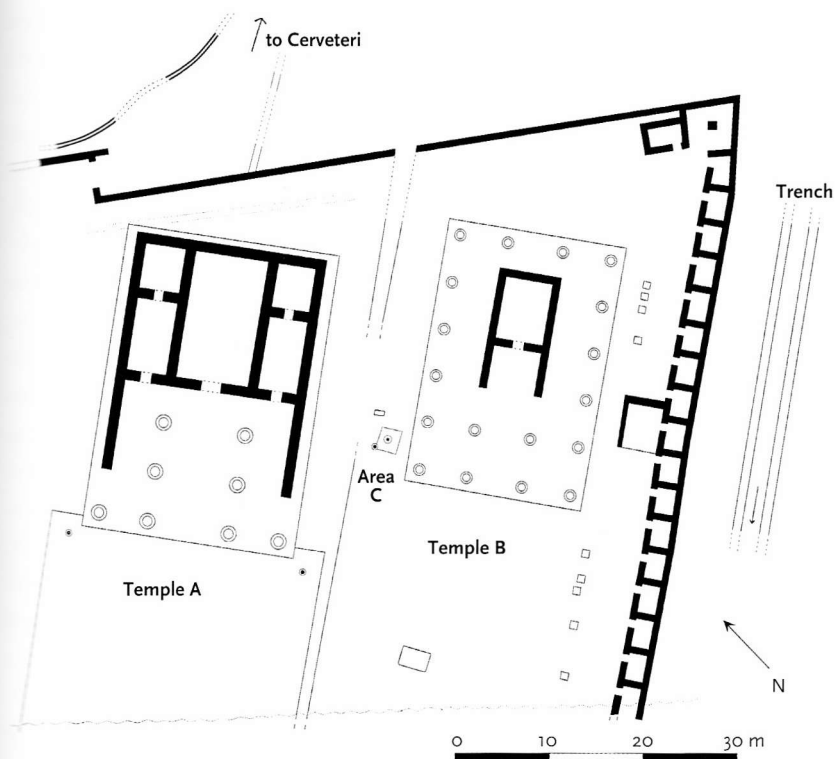


Fig. 152a Plan of Temples A and B at Pyrgi (Santa Severa).

Fig. 152b Reconstruction of Temples A and B at Pyrgi (Santa Severa). Drawing: Museo Etrusco di Villa Giulia.

ern enclosure wall consisted of a long row of small identical cells (perhaps once containing couches) with several altars in front of them.

The Greek-style Temple B was of a type with columns on all four sides (*peripteros*), four on the short sides, six on the long ones. The single *cella* for a cult statue was accessible through a deep porch with a second row of four columns and a *pronaos*. At the back of the temple there was only one row of columns with much less space between them and the *cella* wall. Built of tufa blocks brought from quar-

ries at Cerveteri, the stuccoed walls and the Tuscan columns supported a wooden entablature. This and the tiled ridge roof were decorated with painted terra-cotta revetments; antefixes of heads of satyrs, maenads, and negroes; and with acroteria. Following Etruscan practice, the two pediments were open, with the front ends of the three main longitudinal supporting beams of the roof protected by figured terra-cotta panels representing scenes from the myth of Herakles.

AREA C In the sacred Area c to the left of Temple B stood a cylindrical tufa altar with a vertical conduit for liquid offerings that communicated with the soil below, an arrangement suggesting a cult for an underworld divinity. Next to this altar were a well and a trapezoidal monolithic altar. At the back of this the excavators discovered a low protective enclosure made of re-used terra-cotta *simā* blocks from Temple B that had been improvised here after the temple's destruction by the Romans about 270 B.C. Inside this sheltering enclosure were hidden three rectangular sheets of inscribed gold foil, rolled up; several large gold-covered nail heads, perhaps originally from the wooden door of the temple; and an inscribed bronze tablet. The whole cache was covered by a new pavement of the piazza, created from the rubble of Temple B after its destruction in 270.

THE INSCRIPTIONS Two of the longer gold-foil inscriptions, one in Etruscan, the other in Phoenician, were at first thought to be a bilingual text (like the Rosetta Stone); however, although they turned out to refer to the same events, the texts were not identical, and some of the details remain in dispute. The inscriptions commemorate the dedication of a holy place, sacred to a goddess called Uni in Etruscan and Astarte in Phoenician by one Thefarie Velianas, "king over Kisry" (Kisry being the Phoenician, C[a]isra the Etruscan for Lat. Caere/It. Cerveteri). This ruler, whose existence had so far been unknown to scholars, made his dedication "in the third year of his reign, in gratitude to the goddess, his protectress."

Thefarie Velianas may have been a tyrant, whose rise to power in Cerveteri was facilitated by a Carthaginian presence in the area; his gratitude to the Phoenician goddess for her protection could imply his dependence on his foreign allies for the maintenance of his position at Cerveteri. The shorter Etruscan text on the third gold plaque seems also to refer to the foundation of this new cult and the prescribed ritual for it.

It appears that the great goddess of the temple, Uni, was here assimilated to the armed Phoenician goddess of love and war, Astarte. From Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Carthage her cult had spread to the Carthaginian parts of Sicily, with an important sanctuary at Eryx and others in Numidia and on Sardinia. The fact that one of the longer texts is written in Phoenician, combined with the excavators' plausible interpretation of the row of identical cells beside the temple as destined for the Phoenician priestesses (Gr. *hierodoulai*) of Astarte, suggests that the new cult was introduced to Pyrgi with the support of the Carthaginians, who were



allies of the Etruscans in the battle in the Sardinian Sea. The priestesses of Uni/Astarte probably practiced sacred prostitution, habitual in the cult of Astarte (Hdt. 1.93 and 1.199).

The front of the long row of cells was decorated with antefixes of six different and most unusual subjects, four of which can be reconstructed with certainty from many fragments (FIG. 153). The facade was oriented from sunrise to sunset, and the moldmade antefixes with the figures in movement from left to right were probably arranged along the edge of its roof in a logical sequence according to their subject. First came an antefix showing the sun god, Usil, rising from the sea (A); he is represented as a youth in a short tunic, rushing past disc-shaped waves, his body and head surrounded by a nimbus of rays. Preceding him is Dawn = Etruscan Thesan (Gr. Eos), a female figure in the short tunic of a charioteer and flanked by the two white horses of her team, whom she holds around

Fig. 153 Reconstructions of antefixes from row of cells on south side of Temple B at Pyrgi (Santa Severa). Late sixth century B.C. Drawings: Museo Etrusco di Villa Giulia.

the neck (b). Lucifer, the morning star, in the form of a winged man with the head of a cock, runs ahead of her, his beak opened in a crow, announcing the arrival of daylight (c); four drop shapes painted around him have been interpreted as dew-drops. A female figure in a widespread mantle holds two large, disc-shaped stars in front of its folds (d); she may be Astarte, the mistress of the morning and evening stars. The next antefix is badly preserved, but it seems to have represented an apotheosis of Herakles, the hero being flanked by a pair of horses like a master of horses (Gr. *potnios hippon*). The last end tile in the sequence is also preserved in fragments only, but it probably showed the epiphany of Leukothea/Astarte/Aphrodite rising from the waves. This extraordinary iconography has no precedents and was obviously created specifically for the sanctuary, showing astral divinities, the multifaceted great goddess, and Herakles.

The inscription on a fragmentary bronze tablet discovered together with the gold ones names the goddess Uni and her husband Tinia. He is the Etruscan equivalent of the Greek Zeus, husband of Hera. In several sanctuaries in Etruria (above all at Orvieto) Tinia was, however, worshiped as a chthonic, or, underworld divinity. The round altar communicating with the subsoil in the sacred Area c may therefore have been dedicated to Tinia in his chthonic aspect.

TEMPLE A There seems to have been a lull in the building activities at Pyrgi after the battle off Cumae in 474. In this fateful encounter at sea, a powerful Etruscan fleet was defeated by the Greeks of Cumae, who had called for assistance from the fleet of the Syracusan Greeks under Hieron the Elder of the Deinomenid family. This event marked the beginning of the decline of Etruscan sea power in the southern Tyrrhenian Sea. But, as if in defiance of her Greek enemies (the Deinomenids had fallen in 465, and Syracuse did not renew her hostilities until 454), the city of Cerveteri enlarged the sanctuary's enclosure about 470–460 and erected another, even bigger temple, Temple A, parallel with and just to the north of Temple B (see FIGS. 152a, b). This, in deliberate contrast to the earlier building, follows a non-Greek plan, whose proportions might be compared with the Tuscan temple, as described by Vitruvius. It was dedicated to Thesan/Leukothea.

The facade, which was symmetrically flanked by two wells, consisted of four columns of stuccoed tufa. Access to the body of the temple, which took up the entire width of the podium, was through a deep porch formed by an anta wall on each side and two rows of two columns between them. Three doors led into the interior, divided into a large oblong *cella* in the center and two smaller and narrower ones on each side of it. The walls were constructed of tufa blocks (the internal ones of mud brick), covered with a fine white stucco and painted with motifs in red. Entablature and roof were wooden, tiled, and decorated with mold-made, painted terra-cotta antefixes of heads of satyrs and maenads (made from the same molds as those used in temples at Cerveteri); the *simā* was decorated with a palmette-and-lotus chain, of which important parts have survived.

CONFLICTS IN THE WESTERN MEDITERRANEAN

In Sicily, the center of the Mediterranean basin, many different peoples and interests were competing with each other. Greek colonists from Chalkis on Euboea controlled the Straits of Messina; other Greek colonies were spread along the island's north, east, and south coasts, while the Carthaginians had taken over the old Phoenician settlement on the small island of Motya near Trapani at the western tip of Sicily. From there and from Carthage itself on the African coast opposite, they were able to control the shipping routes passing south of Sicily. Other Carthaginian emporia were established on the northern Sicilian coast at Palermo and Solunto. On Sardinia they had occupied natural ports such as Bitia and Nora near Cagliari and Tharros near Oristano. Here, as in Sicily, the Carthaginians took over earlier Phoenician settlements.

The Etruscans' coastal points of support in the Gulf of Salerno were used for economic as well as military purposes. The main naval activities carried out from here were probably directed against the Lipari Islands, occupied by Greek settlers from Rhodes and Knidos who were able to interfere with Etruscan shipping in the southern Tyrrhenian Sea. Ancient sources as well as votive gifts dedicated by both sides in the sanctuary of Apollo in Delphi indicate that the fortunes of war varied, but the Etruscans' naval enterprises in the southern Tyrrhenian Sea ultimately ended in defeat.

In the western and northern Tyrrhenian and in the Gulf of Lion the situation had also changed considerably. As early as the second half of the seventh century the Samian seafarer Kolaïos had reached Tartessos at the mouth of the Guadalquivir in southern Spain. About 600, the Phokaïans—Ionian Greeks from western Asia Minor—had founded the colony of Massalia among the local Ligurian tribes. Long-distance sailors of great experience, the Phokaïans were reported by Herodotos to have been the first Greeks to have reached Etruria, the Adriatic and, beyond the Pillars of Hercules (the Straits of Gibraltar), Tartessos, where they formed friendly relations with King Arganthonios, the ruler of this silver-rich region.

Massalia grew slowly, reaching considerable wealth by the end of the sixth century, when she was able to erect a treasury at Delphi. From Massalia luxury goods reached the interior of Gaul through native coastal and river trade routes up the Rhone and its tributaries. The best-known example is the treasure excavated in the Hallstadt-period princely tomb at Vix. Previously these northern Mediterranean shores had been the scene of sporadic activity of Etruscan merchants (p. 62).

The Battle in the Sardinian Sea

When, under siege from the Persian conquerors of Asia Minor, a part of the population of the Greek city of Phokaia decided about 545 to emigrate to the west, they sailed to Corsica. Here, on the east coast, they settled at the site of Aleria (ancient Alalia). The city had been founded twenty years earlier by other Phokaïans, fol-

lowing a Delphic oracle (Hdt. 1.165.1). From Aleria the Phokaiaians began to raid the trade routes along the Tyrrhenian and Sardinian coasts used by both Etruscan and Carthaginian shipping. We know from Aristotle (*Pol.* 3.9.1280a.36) that the latter nations had reached accord on commercial matters, such as what goods could be imported, rights of residence, and nonaggression pacts. The piratical activities of the Phokaiaians seriously threatened the established safety of Etruscan sea traffic and Carthaginian plans of expansion in Sardinia and led to a military alliance between the two. It seems likely that it was individual Etruscan cities, rather than the whole nation, that formed alliances with Carthage.

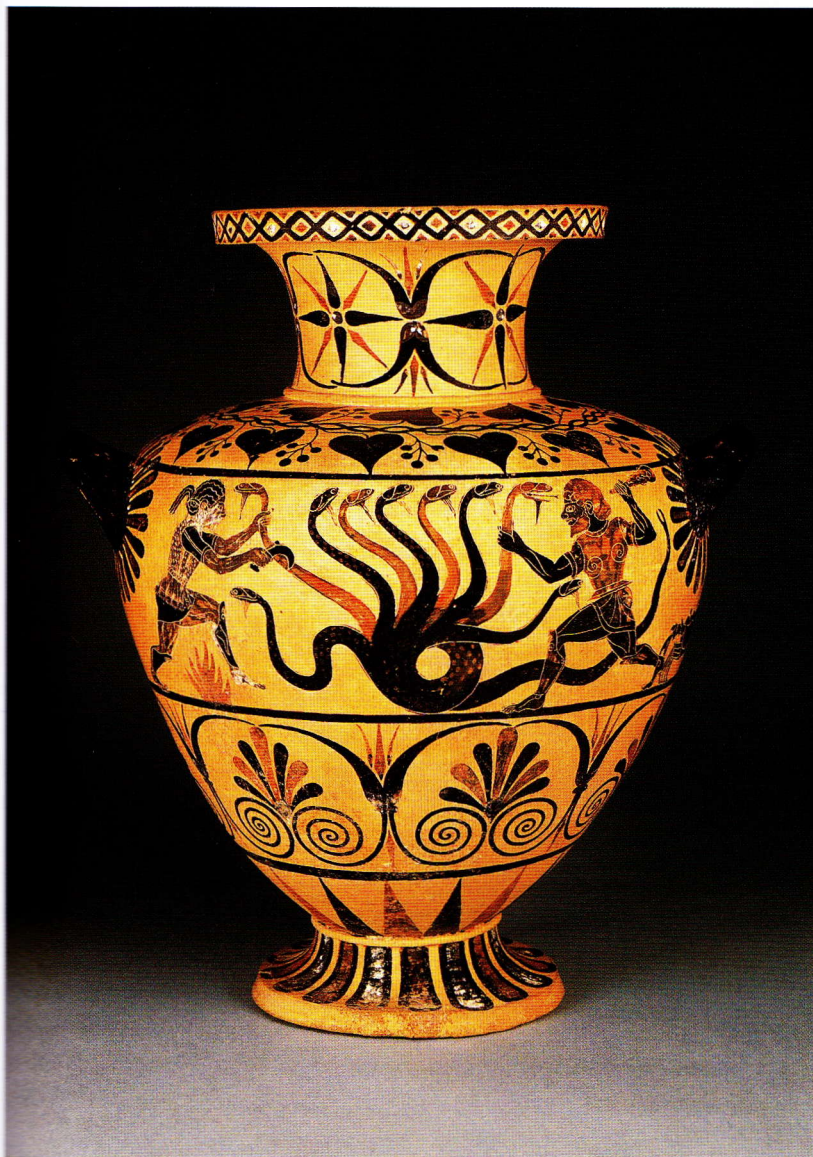
About 540 a naval battle took place in the Sardinian Sea involving sixty Phokaian ships and an equal number of Etruscan and Carthaginian vessels; both sides suffered heavy losses. Herodotos tells us (1.167) that forty Greek ships were sunk and the rest, in which the survivors returned to Aleria, were badly damaged. The Phokaiaians who were taken ashore as prisoners by the men of Cerveteri were stoned to death, an outrage for which the offending Etruscan city suffered divine retribution in the form of a plague.

As a result of this sea battle the Phokaiaians abandoned Corsica, where Aleria now became an important Etruscan colonial settlement, extracting tribute from the indigenous population of the island in the form of slaves and natural products. Carthage meanwhile conquered Sardinia between 545 and 510.

An ivory plaque carved with a boar and inscribed on the back in Etruscan is an interesting document testifying to the friendly commercial relations that had existed between Etruria and Carthage. It was found in the necropolis of Ste. Monique at Carthage in Tunisia. The inscription describes the owner as Punic (*mi puinel*) and from Carthage (*karthazie*). Three small holes indicate that the plaque could be fitted together with a corresponding double and thus probably served as an identification for the bearer (Lat. *tessera hospitalis*), when he presented himself to a host on his travels. Similar inscribed plaques, found at Poggio Civitate and at Sant'Omobono in Rome, show the wide distribution of this custom.

The fugitive Phokaiaians first sailed to Reggio at the southern tip of the Italian peninsula and finally settled a new colony south of Paestum at Velia. Individual Phokaiaians, however, seem to have established themselves successfully in Etruria. Among these were two master vase-painters, who between 540 and 520 in a workshop in Cerveteri produced finely decorated water jars, the Caeretan hydriai. Their subjects are taken from Greek mythology, Homeric epic and hymns, and aristocratic life (FIG. 168).

According to Herodotos, the Caeretans were anxious to expiate their crime of killing the Phokaian prisoners and the resulting paralysis in men and beasts who passed the cursed spot. They sent a deputation to Delphi, where they had a treasury. The oracle advised them to honor the dead Greeks with a magnificent funerary ceremony and to institute recurring athletic and equestrian contests,



which, so Herodotos tells us, continued to his day. A persuasive theory has identified a huge tumulus at Montetosto on the road from Pyrgi to Cerveteri (as well as a neighboring building) with the burial place of the slaughtered Greeks.

Developments in South Italy contributed to the gradual collapse of the existing network of political and trade connections. The Etruscans had long entertained friendly relations with the flourishing Greek city of Sybaris in Magna Graecia; but Sybaris was defeated and destroyed by her neighbor Croton in 510 and was thus lost to Etruria as a trading partner. This and the events at Rome, Capua, and Cumae described above disrupted communications between Etruria and Campania.

Fig. 168 Caeretan hydria with Herakles and the Hydra. Last quarter of sixth century B.C. Painted pottery. H. 44.6 cm. Malibu, J. Paul Getty Museum 83.AE.346.